

WASHINGTON, DC –“ Members of Connecticut’s House delegation, Joe Courtney (CT-2), Rosa DeLauro (CT-3), Jim Himes (CT-4) and Chris Murphy (CT-5), today sent a letter to Speaker Nancy Pelosi urging her to schedule a vote on the Seniors Protection Act, H.R. 5987. The bill would provide a one-time \$250 payment to Social Security beneficiaries, offsetting the zero COLA increase the Social Security Administration is expected to announce tomorrow. COLA updates are based on a formula that tracks inflation – not based on Congressional action.

The full text of the letter is below:

October 14, 2010

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
House Speaker
Office of the Speaker
H-232, U.S. Capitol
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Speaker Pelosi,

This Friday, the Social Security Administration is expected to announce a zero cost of living adjustment (COLA) update for Social Security benefits in 2011. The announcement will unfortunately herald the second year that Social Security benefits will not increase since the COLA was instituted in 1975. And while the zero COLA update is based on a formula that tracks inflation, not on a discretionary decision by Congress or the Social Security Administration, we believe that current economic circumstances that America’s seniors and disabled individuals confront merits intervention.

To this end, we would strongly encourage you to bring forward the Seniors Protection Act (H.R. 5987), legislation that would provide a one-time \$250 payment to Social Security beneficiaries to offset the zero COLA update for 2011, to the House floor for consideration when Congress reconvenes on November 15, 2010.

In the past, Social Security COLA updates have worked to offset rising housing, food, and transportation costs that beneficiaries face. While these updates have reflected “top line” inflation trends, they do not reflect rising property taxes, prescription drug costs and a recent spike in energy costs, all of which underscore the need for an increase in 2011. Additionally, faltering investments in IRAs and 401(k) s have also disproportionately impacted seniors’ budgets as they rely on this income in retirement.

In the long-term, we believe that the structure of the COLA formula should be modified to better account for senior consumption trends, like higher health care spending which has historically outpaced general inflation. However, in the short-term, the Seniors Protection Act will provide

needed relief to millions of seniors that currently rely on the Social Security program. Again, we would urge you to bring this bill up for consideration when Congress reconvenes on November 15th.

For the past two years, Congress has voted to prevent automatic congressional pay raises for 2010 and 2011. By contrast, it is necessary that we vote to ensure a raise for Social Security beneficiaries next year, which we believe is an issue of basic fairness. Thank you for taking these thoughts into consideration and we look forward to continuing this dialogue with you.

Sincerely,

/S
JOE COURTNEY
Member of Congress

/S
ROSA DELAURO
Member of Congress

/S
JIM HIMES
Member of Congress

/S
CHRIS MURPHY
Member of Congress